



TOXICS IN YOUR COMMUNITY

# NEWSLETTER



Fall 2008 - 25th Anniversary Edition

## CEC 1983-2008: Celebrating 25 Years of Protecting New York's Communities and Environment

Citizens' Environmental Coalition (CEC) began in August 1983, when 100 community activists organized a coalition to support each other in cleaning up toxic waste sites at a statewide conference in Lake George, NY. Those first CEC activists created a statewide network and started working together across New York to get toxic pollution cleaned up. CEC has grown into a coalition of over a hundred groups and thousands of members.

Over the past 25 years CEC's mission statement has not changed. CEC was established to bring citizens together in order to share the resources, skills, and information needed to advocate for safe and healthy communities. Without our committed members we would not have been able to overcome the obstacles that faced our organization, develop effective approaches to win countless environmental battles, and become as significant a force in New York's environmental movement as we have proven to be.

Cleaning up pollution across New York has been at the forefront of CEC's mission as we helped to pass laws to refinance the State Superfund toxic waste cleanup program, to establish a Brownfield site cleanup program,

and to investigate and accelerate the cleanup of over 600 hazardous sites.

CEC has also worked with community task forces and

companies to prevent chemical spills and accidents, and to pass laws banning toxic brominated flame retardants and mercury in consumer products, and to stop the reopening of the West Valley nuclear waste site. Today we are working to clean it up.

At the core of our organization lies the importance of empowering communities and individuals to protect public health and advocate for environmental justice. CEC has provided over 40,000 individuals with fact sheets on various environmental issues, educated over 6,000 students in a Water Protection program, and helped over 4,000 citizens to obtain testing or cleanups of toxic sites. We have also successfully organized networks such as the *Alliance for Toxic-Free Future* and the *NY Labor- Environment Network*, as well as a Healthy Environment- Healthy Economy conference. These networks have brought together labor, business, environmental, health, and community groups in order to work on effective pollution prevention initiatives.

For 25 years CEC has been helping communities and individuals fight for their right to a clean, healthy, and safe environment. We have been and continue to be at the forefront of New York's environmental movement, connecting the grassroots to the statehouse to advocate for health protective policies. **THANK YOU ALL !**



CEC, then called "Toxics in Your Community", was first started October 1983 at Silver Bay NY. Pictured here are those original organizers. (L-R) Jonathon Gerard, Anne Rabe, Chris Ballantyne, Ms. Gerard, and Irene.

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**INSERT: 2008 Board of Director Election Ballot**

**Citizens' Environmental Coalition**

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***CEC Mission Statement***

Citizens' Environmental Coalition is New York's leading environmental health organization bringing the grassroots to the statehouse to advocate for safe and healthy communities.

CEC coordinates the Alliance for a Toxic Free Future, a coalition of community, environmental, labor, health and environmental justice groups working to prevent harm from toxic chemicals. In 2008, CEC has campaigns to prevent pollution and promote environmental health, zero waste, green purchasing, green buildings, green jobs, brownfield and radioactive waste cleanup.

“To know that even one life has  
breathed easier because you have  
lived, that is to have succeeded.”

— Ralph Waldo Emerson

**Executive Director's Corner**

*I am pleased to be guiding Citizens' Environmental Coalition in 2008 as we celebrate our 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and remember many victories.*

*CEC has tackled many of the most serious polluting practices in New York State successfully. Now we must advance a vision for a sustainable future that prevents pollution, protects public health and advances environmentally preferable practices like green buildings and green purchasing. Given that New York State is facing large budget deficits, sustainability is the most important lesson for our public officials. Sustainable thinking enables us to find the best solution for the economy, for the environment and for people. See the article on Zero Waste to understand the myriad of benefits that can be derived from a sustainable solution.*

*I have been a strong supporter of CEC for many years including service on the Board of Directors. For over twenty years, I have worked to protect New York's environment at Consumers Union, working with grassroots organizations and coalitions including the NYC Environmental Justice Alliance and the Zero Waste Campaign. As a nurse, I am especially concerned about protecting public health from environmental hazards. We have known that environmental conditions have a significant impact on public health since the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. In fact environmental improvements related to waste, sanitation, water quality and housing prevent disease and are more responsible for the general health of the population today than more familiar advances in medical treatment. The lessons of the early 19<sup>th</sup> century must be brought back to the forefront today. Highly toxic pollutants that do not degrade in the environment accumulate in our food and in our bodies. Our children are born with a toxic chemical load, a terrible burden. We must act now to protect the children of today, our promise for tomorrow. I hope you will join us for a Healthy and Sustainable Future!*

*It is an exciting time to work at CEC and I look forward to working with you on our environmental campaigns. However, a lot of hard work lies ahead and we could really use your support. Please consider a donation for our work! We can't do this without you.*

Sincerely,



Barbara J. Warren

# New York's Brand New Pollution Prevention Institute is Established!

Advisory Committee Met August 20, 2008,  
OPEN HOUSE Held August 21, 2008

This year, CEC successfully convinced the Governor and State Legislature to provide \$3 million for the new **Pollution Prevention Institute (PPI)**. The Institute will conduct research projects on priority pollution problems, and demonstrate the effectiveness of technologies in laboratory and business field demonstrations. It will also provide education and training programs for businesses to make manufacturing operations more sustainable for workers, the public and the environment. A primary focus of the Institute is *green chemistry* which is the design of chemical products and processes that reduce or eliminate the use or generation of hazardous substances. Pollution prevention is also about sustainability for businesses in the state, helping them to reduce pollution, waste and inefficiency, while saving them money and protecting the environment and public health.

Pollution prevention reduces or eliminates the use or generation of toxic materials and waste through safer substitutes, manufacturing or product redesign, improved operation and maintenance, recycling, reuse, reduction, and green chemistry.

The Pollution Prevention Institute, located at the Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT), with the involvement of the University of Buffalo (UB), Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (RPI) and Clarkson University, has been officially established. In addition, ten Regional Technical Assistance Centers will provide direct assistance to businesses and use the expertise of the Institute. Recently, the Department of Environmental Conservation appointed CEC Director Barbara Warren to the PPI Advisory Committee, as well as Roger Cook of the Western NY Council on Occupational Safety & Health, who is a member of CEC's Alliance for a Toxic-Free Future (ATFF). The meeting of the Advisory Committee generated a lot of excitement for all parties involved in launching this program and collaborating to make it a success. DEC staff under the Pollution Prevention unit at DEC saw the fruits of their extraordinary efforts over the course of many months.

CEC and the groups in the ATFF worked for over two years to urge the state to establish a PPI. It is modeled on the best program in the country—

Massachusetts's Toxic Use Reduction Institute (TURI) based at Lowell University. The state-funded Institute was set up in 1989 due to a pioneering state law, the Toxic Use Reduction Act, which also requires businesses to file Toxic Use Reduction Plans.

CEC also used the results of a national survey to make the case that pollution prevention saves money and avoids waste

**From 1990 to 2004, Massachusetts had:**  
- 41% reduction in the use of hazardous substances (per unit of production);  
- 65% reduction in the generation of hazardous waste (per unit of production); and  
- \$14 million in overall cost savings for the entire state over a 7 year period.

generation. The National Pollution Prevention Roundtable survey documented the following benefits:

- From 1990 to 2000, 60 state programs resulted in the avoidance of more than 167 billion pounds of pollution.
- In just 3 years, 29 programs reported savings and economic benefits of more than \$500 million and the avoidance of over 6 billion pounds of pollution. (2001-2003).

Leaning heavily on the Massachusetts law and the input of Massachusetts experts, CEC developed a proposed Governor's Executive Order and asked then newly elected Governor Spitzer to consider it in December 2006. We organized a diverse ATFF coalition in support of the proposal, including health groups, such as NYS Breast Cancer Network, labor groups, such as United Steelworkers, and environmental and grassroots community groups. Governor Spitzer decided to set up the Institute through a budget amendment which passed in 2007. In 2008, CEC was instrumental in helping to obtain funding for the PPI.

For more information, contact Barbara Warren at [warrenba@msn.com](mailto:warrenba@msn.com) or 518-462-5527.



# What's Happening with Garbage? Answer: TONS!

## Zeroing Out Waste & Inefficiency: A New Waste Plan for New York

The NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) has at long last decided to update its state planning for solid waste. The existing State Solid Waste Management Plan is over 10 years old. DEC is calling their new effort "Beyond Waste" and has set up a Solid Waste Management Advisory Group. DEC is a key member of the group and we are excited about advocating for zero waste.

Achieving zero waste (or darn close) is ambitious, but if we don't set ambitious goals how do we make progress? If we set a zero waste goal for 15 years in the future, and only reduce waste going to disposal by 70%, we will have saved enormous amounts of energy, prevented air, land and water pollution, increased recycling, transferred reusable goods to non-profits and those with low-incomes, created new jobs in our communities— and diverted tons of waste from landfills and incinerators. If we don't address the remaining 30% of the waste stream, will it be a total failure? No, because we will be eliminating waste and inefficiency and creating a sustainable system that invests in our communities and gives back important social benefits.

For every bag of trash you put out at the curb from your household, 70 trash bags are created upstream by producers of the products you buy.

**Waste Prevention & Reduction** practices reduce the amount and toxicity of waste entering the waste stream. The highest preference is to design waste "away" by requiring producers to reduce waste and toxic materials in their product and packaging. This is called "product stewardship." New York is starting to advance policies that require producers to be more responsible for the waste they create. We can also learn to be better shoppers and to divert waste

elsewhere through home composting of food waste, taking old books, clothing and other goods to a reuse center, and recycling. We can then avoid one of the most costly aspects of municipal waste programs—the cost of collection.



**Reuse** targets still valuable goods for transfer to other households or non-profit organizations. Most reuse is quite informal, but in some cities reuse centers have created jobs. The dollar value of the goods transferred offers considerable social benefits. Reuse centers can become social centers and help with education and outreach on recycling programs.

**Recycling programs** are the most familiar and have the most support around the country. However, there are wide differences in the scope and success of different programs. New York must energize recycling and greatly increase it. Pay-as-you-throw programs are wildly successful nationally, increasing diversion by as much as 40% by charging for trash disposal while offering free recycling services.

**Composting** has been neglected for far too long. The vast majority of the waste stream is in fact compostable material—as much as 70-75%... However, in general we prefer to recycle paper since it is a valuable commodity rather than to compost it. Green waste—food, yard waste and soiled paper—can be easily composted. Many states are rapidly expanding their compost programs to avoid using landfills for this material. Composting produces a valuable soil amendment that increases organic material in soil, increases soils' ability to hold water and helps fight many plant diseases. In landfills, organic material produces methane, a potent greenhouse gas.

**Zero waste is sustainable because it rests on the three pillars of sustainability: economics,**

**environment and social responsibility.** It is the most cost-effective strategy, while simultaneously providing positive economic development and jobs. It does the most to protect the environment; by saving materials it saves natural resources and energy; by preventing polluting landfills and incinerators, toxic air emissions and water contamination are avoided; by saving energy and reducing greenhouse gases it helps address climate change. Social responsibility

Did you know that pursuing zero waste strategies nationally for our trash could be the quickest, easiest and most cost-effective way of addressing climate change? Adopting zero waste strategies are equivalent to shutting down 20% of our coal burning power plants.

is achieved by avoiding the kinds of facilities no one wants in their neighborhoods—landfills and incinerators, and by creating local jobs and transferring useful goods to other owners.

The state DEC may not be able to include all aspects of zero waste in the new Solid Waste Management Plan without getting the help of the legislature to pass certain laws, like product stewardship requirements.

### **New Solid Waste Facility State Regulations**

In addition to the revised plan, DEC is also going to revise its regulations for solid waste facilities in the near future. This includes landfills, incinerators, transfer stations, recycling and composting facilities.

### **Tell us Your Community's Garbage Story**

What is happening with garbage where you live? Where does the garbage go? Does your community have a landfill, incinerator, transfer station or recycling facility? Are you experiencing any environmental problems from trash handling in your community? Is your landfill filling up? How successful is the recycling program in your community? Who handles your trash—a government entity or a private hauler? What would you like to see more or less of? What policies should the state promote? CEC needs to know what the situation is where you live to be better advocates.

We have at least 3 different opportunities to improve the solid waste picture in New York State in 2008 and 2009:

- 1) Advocate for a zero-waste goal in the Solid Waste Management Plan;
- 2) Advocate for strong revised state solid waste regulations that reflect zero waste goals and strategies; and
- 3) Advocate for legislative reforms to improve the laws dealing with solid waste. For example, we desperately need legislation to require recycling of the growing amount of electronics, such as TV sets and their toxic load, and get them out of landfills and incinerators. We need to keep wasted pharmaceutical drugs out of our drinking water, through new programs.

### **Join CEC's Zero Waste Campaign & Send us Your Community's Garbage Story**

- \* You will receive alerts about the latest state activities, meeting notices and other updates.
  - \* You will be part of a campaign to protect your community's environment and leave a more sustainable future for your children.
- Sign up by sending your name, address, phone number and email address to CEC at [warrenba@msn.com](mailto:warrenba@msn.com) or call CEC at 518-462-5527

## **Community Participation Alert**

### **Comments Needed on New State Citizen Participation Handbook**

**It is critically important that the public be involved in decisions regarding the cleanup of Superfund sites, brownfields and toxic landfill sites in their communities. Unfortunately, we know there are many obstacles to effective participation:**

- **Public information can be too technical.**
- **The process can be very lengthy.**

**Now is the time to let DEC know your experiences.**

The state Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) has released a new Draft "Citizen Participation Handbook" for public comment. This Handbook will be DEC's policy guiding how they inform and involve the public on all cleanup decision-making for sites in State Superfund, Brownfield Program, Voluntary Cleanup Program and Environmental Restoration Program. It includes important new sections on environmental justice and some requirements on citizen participation.

\* **You can review the Handbook at DEC's website at** <http://www.dec.ny.gov/regulations/2393.html> or by calling Larry Ennist at DEC — 518-402-9764 or email him at [derweb@gw.dec.state.ny.us](mailto:derweb@gw.dec.state.ny.us).

\* **Send us your stories** outlining any problems you have experienced related to cleanup at these sites. Send them to CEC Director Barbara Warren at [warrenba@msn.com](mailto:warrenba@msn.com) or call 518-462-5527 X 13.

\* **Comments are due October 20, 2008, but we urge you to ask for an extension of this deadline.** Comments should be sent to Larry Ennist, Division of Environmental Remediation, DEC, 625 Broadway, Albany, NY 12233-7012 or e-mailed to [derweb@gw.dec.state.ny.us](mailto:derweb@gw.dec.state.ny.us).

# CEC: A Photographic Essay on 25 years of Advocacy



**STOP CORPORATE WELFARE:**  
CEC and the NYS Labor & Environment Network held a Rochester, NY press conference in 2001 in support of a corporate subsidy accountability legislation. (L-R: Roger Cook, Robin McClellan, Brian Eden, Sue Wright, and Anne Rabe).

**LOBBYING FOR TOXIC CLEAN-UPS:**  
CEC staff and activists in front of the Legislative Office Building in Albany after meeting with legislators in support of Superfund refinancing in 1999. (L-R: Renee, Karl Breyman, Kelly & Caitlin Travers-Main, Sharon).



**EARTH DAY LOBBY DAY:** Anne Rabe, CEC Executive Director speaks at the statewide press conference at the 2001 Earth Day Lobby Day.



**PHASE OUT PVC POISON PLASTIC:**  
CEC staff Rob Attardo and Laura McCarthy speak at a North Greenbush, NY media event calling on Target to stop selling polyvinyl chloride (PVC) products in 2007.

**CEC BOARD AND STAFF**

**GATHERING:** CEC Board and staff enjoyed an outdoor meeting and picnic in Saratoga County in 2000. (L-R Front: Mike Schade, Rennie Sanges, Jack Ossont, Ed Fitzpatrick, Tom Ellis; Back: John Chilcott, Kathy Curtis, Anne Rabe, Bobbi Chase, Sandy Fonda, Valerie Knight, Lynne West, and Suzanne Mattei.) Photo by Beth Sanges.



**PROTECT OUR HEALTH:** At CEC's first press conference in 1986, (L-R) Sandy Fonda and Anne Rabe call for funding health studies done in communities harmed by toxic waste sites.



**PROTESTING LOVE CANAL RESETTLEMENT:** In 1990, CEC joined national leaders at Niagara Falls Rally to protest the lack of a cleanup at Love Canal. (L-R: Joanne Hale, Pat Brown, Ed Begley (Actor), Lois Gibbs (CHEJ), and Rose Bugman (IBEW).



**"IT'S HOT IN HERE"** says Diane Hemingway, CEC Western New York Director, at a United Steelworker Chemical Hazard Training in 1991. (Diane is now the Environmental Coordinator for the national USWA).



**DON'T POLLUTE OUR AIR:** Kathy Curtis, CEC Executive Director, speaks at a 2004 State Capitol media event in support of legislation to ban burning garbage in burn barrels.

**CEC RECEIVES NATIONAL AWARD:** CEC Board member Tom Ellis (Center R) and Director Anne Rabe (L) receive awards from Ralph Nader (Center L) and Lois Gibbs (R) at the 1995 National Center for Health, Environment & Justice Conference.

**SOLIDARITY MAKES US STRONGER:** CEC Board and staff stand in front of former Department of Environmental Conservation Colonie, NY headquarters in 1989 after a meeting with officials (noting that "Chemical Bank" is co-located in DEC bldg.). (L-R: Geoff Welch, Sara, Jerry Sterritt, Joanne Hale, Anne Rabe, Pat Brown, Mike Watier, Tony Luppiero, Mary Orr (hidden), and Sandy Weston).



**PROTECT NEW YORK CITY'S DRINKING WATER:** CEC Board members tour the toxic Kessman toxic dump in Patterson (Putman County) led by Edie Keasbey in 1996. (L-R Front: Charlotte Hartman, Anne Rabe, Tom Ellis. Back: Joanne Hale, Geoff Welch, Edie Keasbey, Brian Eden, and Bob Lovewell).



**KODAK CLEAN UP YOUR ACT:** Board members and staff rally in support of Kodak reducing their large toxic air releases at the 2002 State Democratic Convention in Rochester, NY.



**GRASSROOTS AIR TOXIC TESTING:** In 2003, Denny Larson, a national environmental leader, showed the media and Rochester, NY residents how to test for toxic chemicals in the air near Kodak's large chemical facility.



**WE NEED TO CLEAN UP TOXIC DUMPS:** CEC Executive Director Marion Wise (center) and Board members Mary Anne Hart (L) and Tom Ellis (R) show support for the Superfund at a 1998 political event in Albany, NY.



**TOXIC SHOWER CURTAIN NATIONAL REPORT RELEASED:** CEC Executive Director Barbara Warren speaks at a 2008 State Capitol press conference about a new report detailing toxic chemicals off-gassing from PVC vinyl shower curtains. (L-R: Tom Ellis (hidden) Barbara Warren, Dan and Kelly Travers-Main, Anne Rabe).

# Grassroots Spotlight

## Toxic Dumps, No Place for Our Children

The small community of Middleport NY gives the impression of a picture perfect town. Visitors take a step back in time to a simpler life in this Erie Canal village. Last year, Business Week Magazine chose this community as the 11th best place in the country to raise kids. The criteria used for this was a combination of schools, cost of living, recreational activities and crime rate. What Business Week didn't know was that there's an elephant in the center of town. That elephant is FMC, one of the largest chemical companies in the world. FMC's manufacturing plant sits adjacent to the class II inactive hazardous waste facility on its site. FMC purchased this facility from the former Niagara Sprayer in 1943 and used it as one of its main production facilities of pesticides for residential, commercial and military use. For decades, FMC disposed of its waste in open trenches and ponds on their property.

In 1946 they sold part of the property used to manufacture and test pesticides to the Royalton Hartland Central School District for \$1. (Sound familiar?—you might remember Love Canal had a similar story!) This toxic site's biggest impact is on our children; the school district has a middle school and a high school on the site for grades 5-12. Groundwater investigations have revealed that there is an underground plume of chemicals traveling through groundwater under the athletic fields and releasing vapors into buildings at the schools. In 2006 Trichloroethylene (TCE) was found in two classrooms and several crawlspaces in the schools. No clean-up of school property has been done, or immediate measures implemented to prevent vapors from entering the schools.

The entire town has been impacted by air, surface water runoff and groundwater contamination. Arsenic contamination as well as several other pesticides and metals are widespread in area soils. The groundwater testing has shown dozens of chemicals present like ethylene chloride, Trichloroethylene (TCE), benzene, ammonia and many more. The same contaminants found in the groundwater are also present in the local creek and storm sewers.

In March 2008, FMC applied to operate an above-ground Superfund hazardous landfill, just 100 feet

from the schoolyard fence. FMC is planning to undertake emergency hazardous waste cleanups around the town of Middleport and bring the contaminated soil and debris to this new landfill immediately adjacent to our schoolyard. This means they are moving toxins from one area and storing them permanently beside the schools! Parents are obviously concerned about their children being exposed to these toxic chemicals since children are still developing and much more vulnerable to toxic chemicals.



Our community has been in a constant state of environmental investigation and remediation for the last 25 years with no completion date in sight. This is why we formed United

Neighbors Improving Tomorrows Environment ("UNITE") and are working to stop construction of the landfill on the FMC site.

**"WHAT BUSINESS WEEK DIDN'T KNOW WAS THAT THERE'S AN ELEPHANT IN THE CENTER OF TOWN"**

UNITE is pursuing legislation to prohibit landfill construction near sensitive populations in NYS. Our group is also working to strengthen vapor intrusion regulations and secure real time monitoring of air quality in the school and surrounding community. Our main focus in the next few months will be to stop this new Superfund landfill from being constructed.

Communities across the country are prohibiting sex offenders from living within 1000 feet of schools...Drug possession within 1000 feet of a school is a felony...Bringing a weapon of any kind onto school grounds is a felony...We fingerprint and run criminal background checks on all school employees... We require parental notification of pesticide applications... And yet, the state and federal government are planning to allow the use of minimal and flexible standards for a new Superfund landfill to hold hazardous material 100 feet from a schoolyard.

New York State needs to take a stand for these children. Send a clear message that their health and safety is the top priority! If you are interested in being involved please contact UNITE at [contact.unite@yahoo.com](mailto:contact.unite@yahoo.com)

# Green Purchasing Victory!

CEC has been leading the effort to green the purchasing policies of the State. New York purchases over \$9 billion worth of goods and services annually, leaving a substantial environmental footprint. During the annual Earth Day Lobby Day in April, the State Assembly passed the Healthy and Green Procurement Act (A.7483-A). On April 26, 2008, Governor David Paterson issued a Green Procurement and Agency Sustainability Program Executive Order.

The Governor's new Executive Order requires state agencies to purchase environmentally-friendly products and develop sustainability programs. The new policy ensures that agencies are using their purchasing power to reduce the environmental impacts of the state's operations, create markets for sustainable technologies, reduce disposal costs and create jobs in environmentally preferable goods

"Directing all state agencies to purchase safer, healthier products will provide enormous health and environmental benefits plus substantial cost savings," said Barbara Warren, CEC Executive Director. "We commend the Governor for greening our state procurement and hope the state will immediately develop a priority phase-out list of the worst substances, including carcinogens and persistent, bioaccumulative toxic chemicals." Over the last

two years, CEC was the lead group advocating for the Green Purchasing Executive Order.



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## Benefits of Buying Green Products:

**Saves Money** - Green purchasing can result in significant cost savings. For instance, Massachusetts, which has one of the most advanced

programs, saved over \$500,000 through the purchase of energy-efficient office equipment, remanufactured office panels and toner cartridges, re-refined motor oil and recycled mulch. This net

savings represents more than three times the cost of managing the entire program. King County, Washington, which includes the city of Seattle, saved an estimated \$580,000 through purchasing such items as remanufactured toner cartridges, retreaded tires for trucks and heavy equipment, and recycled antifreeze.

## Promotes Recycling and Reduces Waste

Purchasing products with recycled content reduces the waste going to landfills and assists the state in meeting its 42% statewide recycling goal. The purchase of less-toxic products will help the state meet its pollution prevention goals and lower costs associated with hazardous waste disposal, cleanups and spill prevention. It can also improve indoor air quality and prevent toxic exposures to workers and the public.

PBTs are toxic in very small quantities and cause a wide range of health effects. Many are also carcinogenic. Their failure to degrade rapidly in the environment contributes to their ability to bioaccumulate to higher levels in the food chain, posing serious risks to human health.

**Reduces Pollution of Lakes, Fish and Wildlife** - This policy could help reduce concentrations of persistent, bioaccumulative toxic chemicals ("PBTs") which are already at dangerously high levels in fish living in lakes and streams in NY. The state has issued fish consumption advisories; people should not eat more than one meal per month of fish from waters at the base of the Hudson River. Women of childbearing age, infants, and children under 15 are advised not to eat any fish from more than 130 PBT-contaminated water bodies in New York due to mercury, dioxins, cadmium and other PBT chemicals. **CEC's NEXT STEPS:**

CEC will be working with the State agencies to make recommendations regarding sound purchasing policies for different product categories. We are also hopeful that a green purchasing law will be passed by both houses of the legislature and signed by the Governor.

**ANNOUNCEMENT:** Certain sections of the new Draft SEQR Handbook are available for review and comments. Note there are no deadlines but SEQR is DEC's environmental review process, so we recommend that those interested review the changes.

<http://www.dec.ny.gov/public/6188.html>

# Building Green

## Why Build Green?

Building Green can be done many ways and for varied costs and benefits and we embark on on a path to build green for many reasons. In our Building Green Initiative here at CEC we realize there are three goals homeowners have in mind when building or renovating using green materials and practices.

**To reduce chemicals in our home:** Many of us are concerned about how manufactured chemicals may effect the health and well-being of our children and families. Chemicals found in paint, carpet, flooring, treated wood, and other cleaning products can release chemicals into our home environment effecting the air quality of our living space.



### **To reduce our environmental impact:**

Reducing the impact our lifestyles have on the environment also protects our health and reduces energy costs. Choosing products that are produced sustainably or locally, and avoiding toxic materials can lower our footprint.

**Saving Energy Saves Money:** Reducing energy usage through green design can save a homeowner or business hundreds to thousands a year

## Simple Ways to Green Your Home

**Paint:** standard paint contains toxic volatile organic compounds ("VOC's") which are harmful to your families health. Low VOC paint can now be found at most home improvement stores.

**Solar Water Heater-**This is a form of passive solar power where the sun's energy passes through glass or plastic panels where it is absorbed in dark plates and warms the liquid passing through the pipes

**Air Leaks-**Your home can lose a lot of energy around leaky doors and windows. Check yours on a windy cold day (a candle held up to them can indicate leaks!). Seal up these areas with inexpensive weather stripping. Heat loss from leaks can significantly increase your heating bill and weather stripping only cost a few dollars.

**Insulation-**Avoid Fiberglass, it contains fibers that irritate the throat, eyes, lungs when inhaled and contains toxins such as phenol formaldehyde and asphalt adhesives. Greener choices are available such as cement or soy based foam, cellulose insulation using recycled newsprint and cotton or wool insulation.

## NEW PROGRAM: Guide to Building Green

CEC has embarked on an outreach program to educate the public about Green Building practices and programs. If you or your group would like to receive presentation on Green Building and a copy of our Guide, "A World at Home" please contact Sabrina Wells at 518-462-5527 x 14 or [swells@cectoxic.org](mailto:swells@cectoxic.org)

Sometimes people think the biggest hurdle to building green is cost. In New York that is becoming less and less of an issue as many programs exist that provide assistance to homeowners, business and institutions who want to build or renovate using green materials and energy efficiency products. Also with rising energy costs, making your home more effience can really reduce costs.

**For more information on these programs go to** The New York State Energy Research and Development Authority

### **Loan Programs**

The Energy \$mart Loan Fund provides low interest loans for energy efficient building improvments including appliances and furnaces as well as the installation of renewable energy systems usch as solar and wind.

### **Grant Programs**

A new Green Building Grant Program passed by the legislature last session will provide grants to homeowner of new and existing homes for energy efficiency. The grants will provide up to \$7000 for single family homes and more for multi-family units. will be administrating this program and expect to have it online in the next year

### **Low Income Funding**

Assisted Home Performance Grants provides grant to low income homeowners (those below 80% of their county's median income levels). These grants provide up to 50% or \$5,000 to single family homes for energy efficiency improvments such as refridgerators, water heaters, furnaces, and insulation.

# Progress On Environmental Justice: New Interagency Taskforce

This summer Governor Paterson established an Environmental Justice Interagency Task Force with representatives from 14 state agencies. The Task Force is charged with developing policy recommendations and action plans for each of the participating agencies by December 2008. The goal is to tackle long standing issues faced by environmental justice communities and to implement systemic changes to create a cleaner, healthier environment for all New Yorkers.

A large number of representatives of environmental and environmental justice organizations are advising the agencies through a series of meetings and conference calls. At this time many issues have been collapsed into five workgroups—air, land use, water, food, and toxics. Some issues are supposed to be carried over in every workgroup—jobs, sustainability, health, but seem to be somewhat neglected because of the many issues being covered. To provide an example, here is a limited list of the issues explored in the first meeting of the Land Use group on July 9th: Brownfields, funding related to the Environmental Protection fund, citizen participation, transportation and land use planning, environmental assessments under SEQRA, cumulative impacts, as-of-right zoning, health disparities, state energy planning, and school construction. Advocates are boiling over with hundreds of worthwhile recommendations for the state agencies.

## **Why do environmental inequities exist?**

Environmental inequities relate to who has power in this state and who doesn't. Large corporations and businesses are often given preferential treatment by the state in terms of access to elected officials and state agencies. They also receive subsidies because they provide economic development and jobs. Business priorities and economic interests represent power in the state. Communities are all too often powerless in the face of new polluting projects, illegal operations, or environmental contamination and have to fight for basic information and a minimal amount of oversight and enforcement activity. Community members learn about new threatening projects too

late to be challenged. When attempts are made by these communities, they are met with insurmountable barriers. This situation does not represent the democracy we believe in.

Environmental injustice involves an imbalance in power relationships and the exploitation of people and the environment. Environmental justice communities have even less power than the average community; they are on the opposite end of the spectrum from the powerful and thus more vulnerable. Government must fulfill a critical role in balancing the needs of all the members of society. EJ communities do not need government officials who cater primarily to the interest of businesses that do not meet fundamental

societal requirements related to environmental protection and social responsibility. EJ communities need justice, fairness, and equity. Government should be prepared to balance the scales of justice. The existing imbalance in power between

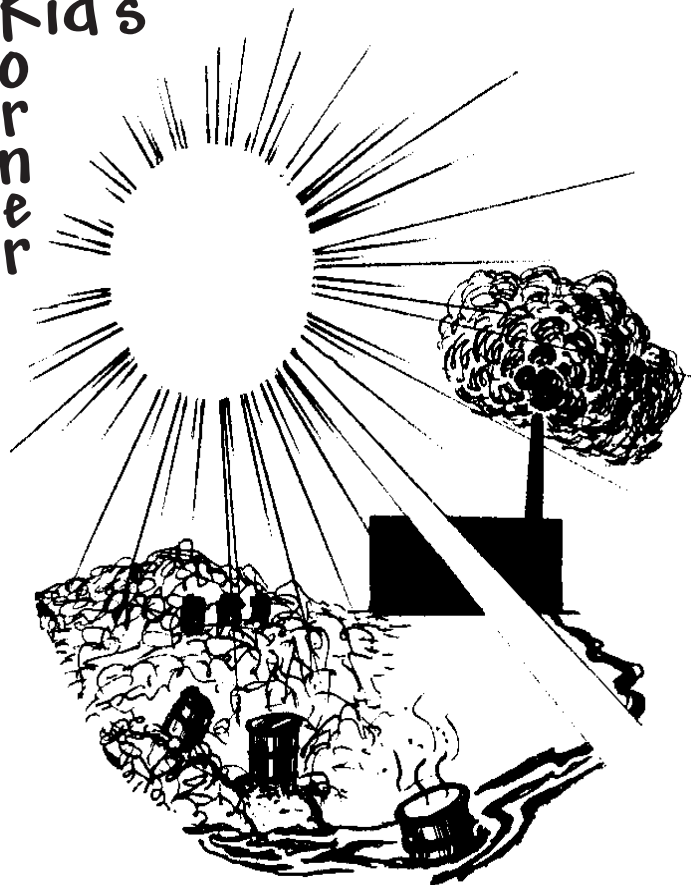
business interests and communities is exemplified by the repeated simple request by EJ communities for access to basic information. Citizens cannot exercise their rights in a democracy without information. The Interagency Task Force must improve the ability of EJ communities not only to access information, but to participate meaningfully.

All the government agencies involved in the Interagency Task Force should be prepared to recognize power abuses and exploitative behavior that impacts people, their health and the environment. We have learned to understand power in various situations by asking three key questions related to particular projects: who pays? who bears the burden? and who receives the benefits?

Fighting for fairness and equity will need to be ongoing, continuing long after December 2008. The Governor's initiative, however, offers a lot of promise for a Better New York Future.

If you are interested in being involved in this effort, please contact: Barbara Warren, Executive Director by email at [warrenba@msn.com](mailto:warrenba@msn.com). We would be glad to include you on an email listserve.

**Environmental Injustice** is the inequitable treatment of people and communities due to their race, ethnicity or income status regarding environmental protection, environmental burdens and benefits.



## Children for Change!

Do you know a child making extraordinary efforts for the environment?

CEC recognizes that children are the future of our communities and already have the power to make change. They are the next grassroots generation.

Send us a story of a young person (under 16) in your community who is working to better their environment. For example: if a child has started an environmental club in school, your 3rd grade class is working towards developing a school-wide composting program, or your grandchild has been raising money to protect a local park, tell us about it!

We will pick a winner to receive CEC's **Children for Change Award** in the Spring of this year and they will be featured in our next newsletter. Send stories and nominations for a child (or group of children) to:

Citizens' Environmental Coalition  
33 Central Ave.  
Albany, NY 12210  
or  
[cectoxic@igc.org](mailto:cectoxic@igc.org)

## Crossword

Be energy-friendly and use your brain power to complete this crossword!

### Across:

2. Environmentally-friendly person's favorite color
7. Prefix meaning earth or rocks
8. Harmful chemicals in water, air, or soil
10. Power that's a *breeze* to use!
11. A fast-growing alternative to wood for building homes (think pandas!)
13. When you turn off lights, you \_\_\_\_\_ energy
14. Any material that can be burned to make energy (gasoline, ethanol, bio, etc.)
16. To remake materials that are no longer useful into new products
17. Type of waste that goes into landfills or incinerators

### Down:

1. A non-renewable fossil fuel (also found in stockings of naughty children)
3. Natural energy sources that can be remade in time and are never used up
4. A fun toy with a tail that uses wind power!
5. A natural fertilizer made from food scraps and yard waste

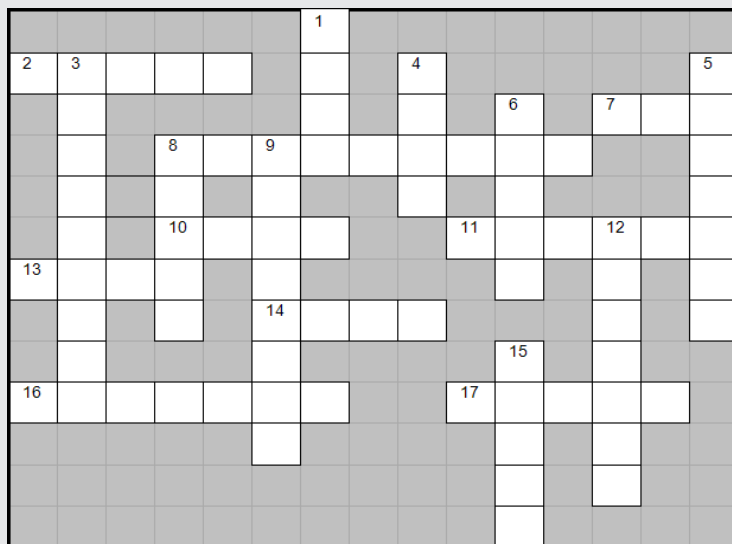
6. Power from the sun

8. Solar, wind, and hydro are types of \_\_\_\_\_

9. A place where solid waste is dumped

12. A way of getting rid of waste that releases toxic smoke

15. Poisonous



# Our Staff



**Barbara Warren**, Executive Director, is an RN and holds an MS degree in Environmental Health Science. She has extensive experience on toxins, health and public policy issues, working for over 10 years with Consumers Union. For many years, she has provided technical assistance to grassroots groups and coalitions.

She has authored reports and prepared testimony on proposed regulations and legislation at the local, state and federal levels. In the past she has served on the Board of Citizens' Environmental Coalition and the NYC Environmental Justice Alliance. Barbara also sits on advisory council's for the Pollution Prevention Institute, the Environmental Justice Interagency Task Force and Chemical Policy Reform.

[warrenba@msn.com](mailto:warrenba@msn.com)

**Sabrina Wells**, our environmental program associate, comes to CEC with broad experience in environmental advocacy and non profit work. She has several years of non-profit experience, including two years as the Watchdog program coordinator at the Hudson Riverkeeper. She holds a Bachelor of Arts in environmental policy from Prescott College in Arizona and is currently working on her master's degree. Sabrina is originally from the Appalachian region of Virginia and the Carolina's. She has traveled and studied extensively in Latin America where she delved into experiential learning theories in conservation, social issues and political systems. Sabrina's experiences traveling and studying abroad have diversified and enhanced her understanding of ecological and social concerns. Her witness of environmental abuses and pollution in New York has further cemented her commitment to protecting the environment. Sabrina is a 2008 Fellow for Women



and Public Policy through the Center for Women in Government and Civil Society. During her fellowship she worked at the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation in the General Counsel office where she researched and completed projects on the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative and environmental justice.

[swells@cectoxic.org](mailto:swells@cectoxic.org)

**Christine Dobbins** is CEC's new office assistant. She holds a Bachelor of the Arts in Psychology and Sociology from the University at Albany and is planning on continuing her education at the College of St. Rose.

Christine originally began her work with CEC as an intern. Her dedication to environmental issues began with her involvement in University at Albany's chapter of NYPIRG. Through NYPIRG's environmental protection project Christine has lobbied local officials for policy changes that focus on climate change and pollution, planned events focusing on global warming awareness, participated in community clean-ups, and ran and organized meetings as a project leader. In addition to her involvement with NYPIRG, Christine was also a member of the UAlbany Students for Sustainability which was founded the spring

semester of her senior year.

[cdobbins@cectoxic.org](mailto:cdobbins@cectoxic.org)



**Katy Smith**, CEC's new intern, has just completed a Bachelor of the Arts in Biology at the College of St. Rose. Born and raised in a small farming town, she has long been concerned with community outreach and education on health and

social justice issues, and has joined CEC to help spread awareness of environmental concerns. She plans to work in environmental education, and also enjoys reading, hiking, international travel, and making a tasty espresso drink.

[ksmith@cectoxic.org](mailto:ksmith@cectoxic.org)

CEC's 25th Anniversary !

Annual Meeting 10/25/08  
Vote for Board Members  
Join us for Dinner!

Nominate a Child for  
Change



drawing by *Caroline Corrigan*



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